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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01

AID-05 /072 W
---------- 009747
R 250511Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3263
INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK
CINCPAC HONOLULU, HAWAII

UNCLAS BANGKOK 22488

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
SUBJ: PARLIAMENT WRAPUP; CABINET ROUNDUP

REF : BANGKOK 21963 170909Z OCT 75

SUMMARY: SENATE APPROVES BUDGET BILL BUT REJECTS TWO OTHERS. SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT ENDS. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT SAYS THAT THE CABINET RESHUFFLE WILL TAKE PLACE SOON. END SUMMARY

1. ON OCTOBER 22 THE SENATE PASSED THE BUDGET BILL BY A VOTE OF 42-17. THE BILL PASSED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY BUT ONLY AFTER SOME SHARP VERBAL EXCHANGES IN DEBATE. THE OPPONENTS OF THE BILL SAID THAT THE BILL WAS DRAWN UP BY THE RICH FOR THE RICH, WAS INFLATIONARY, FULL OF LOOPHOLES AND WAS MEANT TO GAIN POLITICAL POPULARITY FOR HE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY. A PROVOKED PRIME MINISTER RETORTED THAT SOME SENATORS WERE CHILDISH AND IREESPONSIBLE. HE ADDED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEGUES WERE HONEST, HARD-WORKING PEOPLE WHO UNFORTUNATELY BECAME RICH AND HAPPENED TO COME TO POWER.

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2. IN A SURPRISE MOVE THE SENATE WITHHELD ITS APPROVAL FROM

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TWO BILLS PREVIOUSLY PASSED BY THE HOUSE. ONE WAS A BILL FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF SUBDISTRICT CHIEFS AND VILLAGE HEADMEN. THE OPPOSITION CLAIMED THAT THEY VOTED AGAINST THE BILL BECAUSE THEY FEARED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD EASILY INFILTRATE THAILAND'S WEAK LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, THUS SABOTAGING DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND. THE OTHER BILL WOULD HAVE ALLOWED CITIZENS TO BUY FIRE-ARMES AND TO CARRY THE ARMS FREELY. NOTE: ACCORDING TO SECTION 150 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THAILAND, A BILL WITHHELD BY THE SENATE MAY BE RESONSIDERED BY THE HOUSE ONLY AFTER A LAPSE OF 180 DAYS. IF THE BILL IS THEN PASSED BY A MAJORITY VOTE IT GOES DIRECTLY TO THE KING WITHOUT NEED OF FURTHER SENATE CONSIDERATION OR APPROVAL.

3. ON OCTOBER 24 THE HOUSE HELD INTERPELLATIONS, DESULTORY DEBATE ON THREE BILLS, THEN CLOSED THE SPECIAL SESSION. THE HOUSE WILL CONVENE AGAIN IN ORDINARY SESSION IN FEBRUARY, 1976. ALTHOUGH SOME DEMOCRATS HAVE TALKED OF REQUESTING ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY SESSION TO DEBATE A NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE PARLIAMENT WILL REMAIN IN RECESS UNTIL FEBRUARY.

4. ON OCTOBER 23 PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE PROMISED CABINET RESHUFFLE WOULD TAKE PLACE SOMETIME SOON, DEFINITELY BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT IN FEBRUARY. HE INDICATED A PREFERENCE THAT THE FOUR VACANT DEPUTY MINISTER PORTFOLIOS AND THE TWO NEW BUREAU POSITIONS BE FILLED BY CAPABLE PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF PARTY QUOTAS. BUT HE SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH THE UNITED PARTIES BEFORE MAKING ANY FINAL DECISIONS. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD TRANSFER CERTAIN UNSPECIFIED MINISTERS.
WHITEHOUSE

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